

[00:00:00] **Anna Graybeal:** You can't force anyone to do it. But I think having that sort of welcoming kind of attitude where you know, you can really understand and appreciate that these feelings are difficult. You know, once someone is then at least a bit willing to engage a little bit. I think it's then a matter of meeting them with those feelings.

And I'm a group Therapist. I really love group and believe deeply in how powerful it is. And I think what it really comes down to is like, I think the only way to really deal with these feelings is to not be alone with them. You know? I mean there, there's all kinds of strategies of course we can use to regulate ourself.

And, you know, those things are wonderful and hopefully we're all doing them, you know, taking good care of our bodies and our minds. But when it comes down to it, like at the very end, I want to have not been alone with these feelings. I want to have shared them with other people.

[00:01:08] **Ann Kelley:** Hi everyone, this is Ann. Today's episode is part of a series that Sue and I are doing that is about how to live securely in frankly an insecure world. And we can see that all over the place. We can see it every time we turn the news on, and even if we try to ignore the news from gun violence, racial tension, to the media politician's goal of political divide and arguing. And what is really impacting all of us, probably all the above, is consumed in this - and that is the impact of climate change on our everyday world and on our environment. It is a really tough thing to deal with and to find a secure way of relating to something that is so powerfully impactful and frankly daunting about what we do about it. So today I've asked a friend and colleague from Austin, Texas, who I've admired for quite a long time, who has dedicated both her. Professional and personal spheres to the area of climate change. And I'm gonna let her tell some details, but I would like to welcome Dr. Anna Graybeal to the show.

Welcome, Anna.

[00:02:19] **Anna Graybeal:** Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here.

[00:02:23] **Ann Kelley:** So you started your professional world getting a PhD in evolutionary biology and then moved on to get a PhD in clinical psychology. So if this was another episode, I'd be talking to you about the Gluttony for Punishment in two PhDs

[00:02:40] **Anna Graybeal:** you wouldn't be the first.

[00:02:46] **Ann Kelley:** So tell me about that process. How did you get so dedicated and interested in climate change, and how did you get to the world of clinical psychology, which you've integrated into your profession right? Now into your clinical world, the idea of climate change and how to talk about it - but tell us about your journey.

[00:03:05] **Anna Graybeal:** I was really drawn to biology as a kid because I loved animals. Just absolutely was passionately interested in them. I remember very strongly wanting to understand how they worked, like I wanted to actually be able to dissect them, really open them up and see, you know, how did, how did all this stuff fit together? So I ended up majoring in biology in college and then, decided to go into research and got a PhD in evolutionary biology and really threw myself into that. Really loved that work, and that is actually where I first learned about climate change. So that was back in the kind of late eighties, early nineties. And it was beginning to, you know, enter sort of the public sphere, this idea that this was happening. Of course, back then, you know, it seemed scary and alarming, but it also felt like it was gonna be happening on a rather slowish timeline kind of thing. I was working at the time on a group of frogs, which has been on the planet for 200 million years. So I was kind of used to thinking in very very, you know, long time scales. Well then, I ended up switching and moving into clinical psychology, and that's probably a whole other conversation to really explore everything that went on there. Which I'm happy to talk about another time, but I think really sort of in a lot of ways I really wanted to be a psychologist, more than a biologist even, but I didn't let myself pursue that early on in some ways. I started that program in 98, so it was 2004 when I graduated with my clinical psychology PhD, and that was exactly the time that I started having kids. I have two daughters. The first was born in 2004. So I was just on my own getting more and more alarmed about climate change because we were seeing more changes starting to happen. And I probably was primed because of my career first in biology, to know these kinds of things have happened on large, you know, major extinction events have been prompted by climate change events in the past. And then, you know, Al Gore's movie came out in 2006. I actually avoided seeing that movie for a year cause I was kind of like, I already know enough to be scared. I don't need to, you know, get even more scared. But you know, I would guess 2007, 8, 9, 10, sort of in that range, I started to just really feel anxious and felt like no one was looking at this. So, you know, just in my day-to-day life, no one seemed to be talking about it. And I thought, well, I'm just being alarmist. You know, let me go kind of refresh and see what the current science is saying. And when I looked at that and saw it was actually even worse than scientists had predicted. I mean, you've probably seen reports like that. Every time scientists look at it, it turns out things are happening even faster than they had sort of feared it would.

[00:05:42] **Ann Kelley:** Yeah. Listening to scientists, I mean, that has been something- honestly taking deeper dives for these episodes, it's not been helpful to me. I can really relate to you in that scene that the scientists have really

shifted that like I really related to you and you were saying back then it felt like it was a long way off and that those that were interested in it were really sort of projecting way into the future and trying to draw our attention to something in the current that was going to affect our way future selves. And then, slowly but surely it's not our future selves it's affecting. It's like this everyday experience and it sounds like that's what was happening. The deeper you started to look, the more you were seeing.

[00:06:28] **Anna Graybeal:** It's true. It's so scary to go and actually look at what the scientists are saying.

I mean, there are even reports about how scared they are, you know? So it's really hard to bring something to our awareness.

[00:06:38] **Ann Kelley:** I totally relate. Well, you didn't wanna watch the movie because you already had fear, right? I think I did see it, but I related to this whole idea of, I can even feel it. Like do I really wanna let this in? Like if I let this in, what am I gonna do with it? And the idea of resistance. Becomes really big, doesn't it? This idea that if I let it in, I have to really feel it, and that can be an incredibly scary process.

[00:07:10] **Anna Graybeal:** Absolutely. Yeah. I love the way you're putting that. That is really where I began. So, you know, what I first did back in 2012 is I just sort of went into action and I got involved with this organization called Citizens Climate Lobby, which is a volunteer based organization. At the time, they had a very small presence in Texas, but now they've grown tremendously in the last decade or so, and it's a wonderful group. They're dedicated to building the political will for a stable climate. Really wonderful group.

[00:07:39] **Ann Kelley:** And by the way, we're gonna reference that in show notes. And it's also another reason that you came into my awareness because I'm starting to be part of that group. Seeing you in those group meetings was very rewarding, and it's an amazing, amazing group that is trying to just through grassroots and then full lobbying, really get where you can feel like you're making a difference, which helps, right a little bit at a time. But anyway, I jumped in. Keep going.

[00:08:06] **Anna Graybeal:** Yeah, no, I, I like the plug. They're really working on trying to educate just regular citizens on how you can make a difference politically, how you can lobby, and all those sort of stuff. So yeah, it's a wonderful group, but getting back to resistance over time, I think the clinical psychologist in me, the Therapist in me was seeing more and more how that seems to be so much of the block for people, which is completely understandable, and I really wanna make that incredibly clear. You know, that to engage with this at some level means opening up a little bit to some feeling about it, and that is really, really, really hard. And so we all, I think, have a tremendous amount of resistance, I mean, I noticed that in my myself, even a tremendous amount of resistance to going towards this very, very painful and difficult topic.

[00:08:57] **Ann Kelley:** That's one reason why I was excited to have you on the show. We talked actually with our son last episode. Yeah. About having some of these really difficult conversations in the resistance that comes up between generations, the generation that's super aware of it to my generation. Who was as you were like in, well, you were a lot more aware than I was, but just kind of in this experience of "oh, that's, that's our future self. That's way out there" to, it's like right in front of their face. The reason this is really relevant, like why is this relevant on a psychology podcast? And you know, you and I were speaking before the show about like what is secure relating around this? How do you relate securely when this is a really scary topic and here we're bringing it to everybody's awareness and probably maybe raising some people's awareness to a topic that they might wanna push out. But one of the first things that we have to face to be able to get more secure is the awareness of our own activation, right? The awareness that it's threatening to us. Yes. And instead, we can live in our defenses system where it says we're gonna push it out and not see it, or we talked last time, or get overwhelmed and kind of fall flat and feel hopeless. And neither of those is regulating securely. Right. We have to face it. Right. And so one of the things that you're out there really trying to help us do is to, both as individuals, but as therapists, is learn how to face it and talk about it and deal with our resistance. Right. Deal with the defense that comes in.

Yes. And so that's what I'd like for us to do, if we could unpack that. How do you help people? What do you recommend? In this process of helping people recognize the resistance and get through it

[00:10:43] **Anna Graybeal:** well, it's a big question, right? And there's, there's a lot in there. So first off, is understanding and validating the resistance.

You know, the resistance is there for a good reason. The feelings that climate change can stir up are incredibly strong, incredibly activating, and incredibly uncomfortable terror. Rage at all that hasn't been done. I mean, all kinds of difficult feelings that are really hard to have, so. I think first just sort of acknowledging that resistance makes sense. Of course, we're resistant to that. I actually, I've done a workshop for therapists at the American Group Psychotherapy Association for the last four years, and the title of the workshop is, I'd Rather Go Out for Tacos.

[00:11:33] **Ann Kelley:** It's kinda like a true Texan.

[00:11:35] **Anna Graybeal:** Well, it, it came actually from a colleague I was talking about, you know, what should I call this workshop?

And this person said, do we have to talk about this? I'd rather go out for tacos. I mean, there's the resistance right there. Like I don't even wanna have to think about a workshop on climate change, you know?

[00:11:51] **Ann Kelley:** You know, if we could pause for that for a moment, because, you know, when we're talking about resistance, we're talking about dealing with really, really difficult feelings.

But what you're talking about is even allowing them in. Like, we should probably start with that, if there's one is how do you deal with the distress and the fear, but we're assuming there's distress and fear. And for me for a while, like I would let it come in and go out, but I'd rather go out for tacos, you know, like who wouldn't.

Right. And so like, how do you get past like, Like softly speaking, let's help our audience do that. If you're out there going, oh my God, I do not, why are they even bringing this topic up? Yes. How do you help people get past? That initial process of, I'd rather go out for tacos and help people come into the room to say, this is really relevant.

What do you recommend there? Well,

[00:12:38] **Anna Graybeal:** again, I mean, at first, I think just really sort of honoring and letting people know, of course you're resistant to this, you know? That makes perfect sense. And I come from a modern analytic background, right? And so when we think about working with resistance from a modern analysis, there's sort of two main techniques, right? The first one is, Inquiry. So just being curious about it. It, it's a stance of, you know, you're resistant for a reason. Your resistance probably. It must make sense. He wouldn't have it if it didn't make sense, right? So we're gonna just be curious about it and see what we can understand about it. And then the second main technique is joining, which is just saying, yeah, I'd rather go out for tacos too.

It's just joining the resistance and saying, yep, me too. And so it's that sort of delicate balance of, you know, honoring it. Validating it. Making there be plenty of room for the person to sort of, you know, be in their resistance. And then also kind of inviting, well, you know, how would it be to maybe, you know, go out and have a taco and then let's see if maybe we could talk a little bit about climate change. You know, we can't force anyone to do it, but I think having that sort of welcoming kind of attitude where, you know, you can really understand and appreciate that these feelings are difficult. You know, once someone is then at least a bit willing to engage a little bit, I think it's then a matter of meeting them with those feelings. And I'm a group Therapist sort of through and through. I, I really, really love group and believe deeply and how powerful it is. And I think what it really comes down to is like, I think the only way to really deal with these feelings is to not be alone with them. You know, I mean, there's all kinds of strategies of course we can use to regulate ourself and you know, those things are wonderful and hopefully we're all doing them, you know, taking good care of our bodies and our minds. But, you know, when it comes down to it, like at the very end, I want to have not been alone with these feelings. I want to have shared them with other people, you know? So secure relating with others is the way to sort of handle it, you know?

[00:14:47] **Ann Kelley:** Yeah, I love that. And I think there's just sort of two ways into that.

Like there's like those that are out there sort of trained to be there and help people talk. And then there's the others individuals like, how do we. Help you, the listener out there, be more open to it. Yeah,

[00:15:03] **Anna Graybeal:** Yeah.

[00:15:04] **Ann Kelley:** yeah. One of the ways, you know, we want to join with them. Like if you're wanting to turn this podcast off because you'd rather have a taco, we get it.

We get it. But if you're still listening, I personally feel appreciation of people are able like, oh, this is a hard one. So how do you bring awareness if we just. Ring the bell in fear and we scare the hell out of everybody. Yes. And say, you know, if we don't start paying attention right, everything's gonna go to hell in a hand basket.

That hasn't necessarily helped or worked. Right? Right. We've been trying to do that for quite some time. Right. And so if fear doesn't work is actually. Who was it that you the, that Katherine Hak. Haja. Yes. Yeah, Hao, yes. Like I really loved what she was saying when she was really talking about the fact that if people are out there and they identify with a certain stance, climate change is not real.

That's just a bunch of people in there trained to scare us into action and motivate us on our political sides, et cetera. If we start. Screaming our facts and start creating fear. Everybody just locks down. Exactly. It makes me wanna get away from it cuz it's like it overwhelms me.

[00:16:15] **Anna Graybeal:** Her story's actually super interesting. She is, you know, an atmospheric scientist. She's a climate change, you know, researcher, but she's a, an exceptionally skilled communicator. I mean, she's really, really good. I've seen her talk a number of times. She's on the c c L board, she's written this beautiful book and over time she saw exactly what you're describing where. You know, we've published this report and we're telling them how, how dire things are, and then we publish another report and there's 800 scientists. She was one of the members of the I P

P C panels. You know, that were pu putting out these reports, you know, we keep telling them, we keep telling them, and it's not working. It's not working. What you're saying is absolutely right. People do not respond to fear and you know, the sky is falling type of messages. I think she actually literally has moved out of a, a, sort of a climate science department at, she's at Texas Tech into a more of a political science department because she has realized that, you know, what she wants to be working on is not just data and facts and trying to ring that alarm bell, but more understanding how do we engage with people. And her message is we really need to connect on shared values. So rather than using the talking point of climate change, you know, talk about. Whatever is relevant in the community, you li you live in and like for her it's, you know, water and, you know, are they gonna have enough water up in, you know, Lubbock, Texas as things get warmer and warmer. And that's an issue where you can kind of skirt around some of that really politically charged stuff and actually focus on an issue. I mean, for us as therapists, I think we're looking even more down at the level of the emotions and trying to connect there. So not just trying to scare people, of course, but to say, I can understand you're scared. I'm scared too. Could we try to be in this together and talking to each other about this as opposed to trying to persuade each other, get each other to do something, or whatever the, the goal is just to be together, not necessarily to do something, I guess.

[00:18:19] **Ann Kelley:** If that makes sense. Yeah, no, it makes a lot of sense because that's what we're talking about in secure relating, right? Yes. Like is we have to relate. How do we more securely relate in an insecure world? Yes. It isn't just how do we feel more secure because we're not out. We could feel more secure by pushing all the information out. Right. If we think of security as what we feel in our world, like, oh, I don't see it, so I feel very secure. Right. But what you're saying is so important. How do we relate to one another? Yeah. In a more secure way. So that we can make movement. And I loved, I loved her TED talk, actually. Uhhuh, because it ends with hope. Yes. Right? Like yes. Because if we're screaming and yelling, if we don't do anything and everything's about to go to hell in a hand basket, why would I even pay attention?

[00:19:00] **Anna Graybeal:** Right? Yeah. Why not just party until the ship goes down kind of thing. Absolutely.

[00:19:04] **Ann Kelley:** So it's like trying to be able to find hope and solutions and the message that. As therapists, right? We're both psychologists and we're out there trying to like, how do we have our impact in this world on this topic? And for us right now, it's getting people more comfortable or trying to be part of the process of helping people talk about it. Because if we can talk about it, In our own world, in our own sphere, what small part of our sphere can we impact?

[00:19:35] **Anna Graybeal:** Yes, I think of like group is such a powerful format for helping people work on talking when emotions are very activated. You know, modern analysts call it progressive emotional communication. The feelings may be difficult and they may be intense and strong, but we're trying to learn how to express them constructively. So that we can further and deepen our mutual understanding as opposed to just going to, you know, our two sort of opposing positions. And you know, I mean, that's a lifelong work is very, very challenging. It so is, so I'm not pretending that, you know, we're gonna be able to just snap our fingers and show everyone how to do it. It, it takes time and it takes effort. But I do kind of have a like secret hope. Like if everyone in the world could get into group therapy, I think it would help a lot. I love that.

[00:20:30] **Ann Kelley:** Hope. Let's, let's make a support. And not only that is Ken Group Therapist. Help people get through this process, you know? And can individual therapists help get through this

[00:20:40] **Anna Graybeal:** process? You know, as a Therapist it's always a little scary when you have a bit of an agenda, and so I sometimes worry is this having too much of an agenda? But I do feel like if we do our own personal work, To sort of own up to our own resistance. Trust me, I've had my own as well. I have it every day. Probably there's some level of resistance. I don't wanna think about it today, you know, that kind of thing. But if we do our own work on that and we begin to do our own talking about what do we feel, When we think about climate change, I think we begin then to notice when our clients may say things that open, you know, they may come in and say, wow, the weather is really strange today. You know, I've never seen it this hot so early. And we could think of that as, oh, that's just a, you know, little comment about the weather. Or we could ask. More about, yeah. How is that for you? You know? So I guess I do believe that as individual therapists and as group therapists, we can be trying to really be aware of that. It's happening everywhere. I mean, I think at some level, whether it's conscious or not, we're all kind of feeling it. And so just doing our own work first, so we're then in a place to be able to hear it when maybe it's starting to enter the room and help people talk about it. I think there's a lot there.

[00:21:54] **Ann Kelley:** As you say that I think about myself sitting with clients who come in and have those exact conversations and maybe all the ways that. If I'm not even aware of my own resistance, I'm gonna push past those conversations. Like, yeah, it really is. You know? Or I want to take their distress away, you know about it. Or if they tap on it, how do I make the invitation? And I guess we're talking as therapists, but if we could be talking as parents,

we could be talking as friends, like as people. Become aware and they're making comments about the increased hurricanes. Yeah. Or the flooding or the fires now that we hear about constantly, like people are like, oh my God. There's always something like if we can become more aware that it's impacting us and them, we can help that conversation turn to a more robust conversation.

[00:22:42] **Anna Graybeal:** Yeah. And I think that there is a pull in a way to help people feel better as therapists. Yeah, yeah. But I do kind of think this is, like you're saying, the world is not secure.

It is manifestly very much not secure out there. And so I think it might actually be really helpful if we can help people move towards difficult feelings and just be kind of helping them see that. There is actually a path to feeling again, that sort of secure relating with other humans, sharing those hard feelings as opposed to, you know, no, let's avoid, let's avoid,

[00:23:20] **Ann Kelley:** I think there's a lot of questions out there, and I imagine you get that in your clinical office too, is like, if I feel distress, I need to fix it.

Yeah. Why would I just sit in a distress if like, you can tell me why you're distressed and I can fix it. Let's fix it. Ah-huh. And it's the intolerance of sitting in distress, which is understandable. Sign me up like I would. But can you unpack a little bit the process and, and it's fine if you do it, talk about it in group therapy.

But what is the benefit of sitting in the distress rather than moving out of it? And then how do you help people do it in group therapy? How do you help people be able to sit and tolerate that and what's the purpose of

[00:23:58] **Anna Graybeal:** it? This is such a good, good question. I think the benefit is that that's the actual authentic feeling. It is a feeling of distress and you know, we could be talking about climate change, obviously. I mean, people are distressed because of difficult experiences they've had in their life or are having. Whatever it is, and that is the feeling that needs to get attention and they need to have, again, it comes back to really secure relating.

They need to feel that they're not alone with it. They need to feel that they can communicate that to somebody else, that that other person will understand it and help them hold it. I often talk with my clients about, it's sort of a paradox, right? You're gonna move towards difficult feelings, which seems like. Why would I do that? But the more you move towards them and the more help you have with them, it's like you build a bigger container. The feeling is still big and strong, but if you have a much bigger container, it's a lot easier to hold that big feeling. It's not nearly as taxing or as scary or distressing to have the feeling. So yeah, I'm not gonna just focus on making you feel better. I'm gonna focus on moving you towards something with a lot of help and support. And over time, you're gonna be able to begin to feel like, okay, I can feel really angry right now, and it's okay. It's not going to, you know, totally dysregulate me.

It's not gonna be really destructive to people I care about. I'm just aware. I'm really angry and I'm gonna develop constructive ways of expressing that and, and listening to it. It's important information

[00:25:27] **Ann Kelley:** that's really well stated. And so it's like, okay, so it's there, you're saying it's there in the body. It is there. It's there. And so all of the dancing we can do to push it out. And I think that's what's un, I guess it's not unique to climate change. I'm gonna take that back, but. I think maybe it's, we're more aware of the experience that it's there whether we talk about it or not, right? Yes. Like whether it's relational conflict, if you don't talk about it or relational distance, if you don't talk about it, it's still there. You can push away, but it's not like all of a sudden we're all connected. And so with the issues of the climate, it's there whether we're talking about it or not, and by not talking about it, it's in our body, it's in our world, and it's really going to have this very detrimental effect. So if we don't talk about it, talk about it in our relationship, it demises the relationship. But right now, the more we don't talk about it and really think about it in our world, we're just gonna keep seeing the impact.

[00:26:23] **Anna Graybeal:** Exactly. And it's unfortunately accelerating, you know, and getting even worse and worse and worse. I mean, at some level, of course, I do hope that the more people can move into.

Working with their resistance, giving themselves the space they need to kind of take their time to do that, but eventually, ultimately moving towards having more comfort with having these feelings and not being alone with them. Then hopefully maybe, you know, there's more room for them to, to go into some kind of action if that's what they want. Whatever calls them. There's really so much that we need to do that anything that caused you will be a good thing to do. There's no one thing that's gonna fix this problem. Can you

[00:27:02] **Ann Kelley:** speak to some of those things? Like for us, we're trying to help people have these conversations. You're trying to start group programs. You're trying to get group therapists or individual therapists to talk about it, and in that way, that has that trickle down effect because the more people can talk about it. And again, we're saying talk about it together so you're not alone and that you have a higher container that gives you more hope, and then you can open up to the fact that if I don't just ignore it and I bring it in, I can actually be part of something.

[00:27:32] **Anna Graybeal:** Yes, exactly. One thing I do wanna mention that I've actually just started in the last, I guess it's about two months now, is a training group for therapists. So it's a weekly group. For therapists who are

interested in climate and you know, all the things associated, which is kind of everything, but it's a place for those therapists to get support. And not be alone with their feelings about climate. And also be kind of learning how group works by being in a group with each other. Cuz that's the best way to learn group, right, is to be in a group and then supporting each other in, you know, the kind of clinical work that they may end up doing, whether it's with individual clients or maybe starting their own climate groups, that kind of thing.

So that's been a really exciting and wonderful direction that I've been going recently.

[00:28:18] **Ann Kelley:** Oh, that's so exciting. So we won't put that contact information in the show notes. And what about if individuals that may want to join a group themselves, you know, not a Therapist, but any listeners.

[00:28:29] **Anna Graybeal:** Absolutely. You know, I have done a couple of short term groups.

I imagine sort of a 10 week group for people to. Approach and think about climate change as a Therapist, as the leader. It's been really sad for me when those groups end. Yeah. You know, almost just too painful. Like I work, you work so hard to get a group of people together and you know, they're doing such deep, incredibly powerful and sort of moving work together, and then it's over. And so I have been like, I don't like that 10 week model so much. At least for me, you know, I think it could work great for other people perhaps, but I've been more in a place of like, any group you join, this could be a topic. And, and certainly, you know, I would encourage anyone to, if they wanna talk about climate change, bring it up in a group that you're in, and if people are showing up with their resistance, That's not surprising. You know, that's been my story in my own personal groups. You know, I've started talking about this a decade ago and I met a lot of resistance from other group members who were like, I don't, I don't wanna think about this. And man, I understand, but we're sort of working on it. You know? We're working on building that secure, relating with each other. I will say there are some organizations out there where you can get support as a person. Like there's something called the Good Grief Network. They run kind of a 10 week. It's not exactly group therapy, it's more like a just a 10 week group class kind of a thing. But it would be a place certainly to connect with other people who are having similar feelings. But that's just one example. There's actually a really burgeoning field in the last 2, 3, 4 years, there's really been an explosion of interest within the mental health community around climate change. One good one that I know of is called the Good Grief Network, which is kind of almost based on like a 12 step program concept. It's a 10 week kind of manualized program. So you know, you meet in a small group format and each week you're kind of have a different focus around addressing your thoughts and feelings about climate change. And there's just some different kinds of activities that are, are encouraged to engage in a 10 week structured program.

[00:30:34] **Ann Kelley:** Any other resources that come to mind that

[00:30:35] **Anna Graybeal:** people could seek out? Yeah. Another one that I really want to let people know about is called the Climate Psychology Alliance, and this actually started in the uk so there's a UK section or or version of it, I guess. And then a more, more recently, there has been a growing contingent that has now formed the Climate Psychology Alliance. Dash North America to distinguish themselves from the Climate Psychology Alliance uk. And it's a really rapidly growing group of mental health practitioners who are concerned about the climate crisis and several kinds of things that they offer. One is a climate aware Therapist directory. So if you're somebody that's looking for a Therapist that you know is, you know, informed and able to sort of work on these issues, you can go to that directory to find a Therapist. If you're a mental health professional who is, you know, interested in the climate, you can also get yourself listed on that directory as a climate aware Therapist. They're also offering these things that are called climate cafes, which as the name sounds like it's, it's a one-time gathering meant to be a place where you can come together with other people simply to be. In community with your thoughts and feelings about climate change. And so it's a little bit of a taste, you know, it's just, it's just one session, but it's a taste of what it can feel like to share some of these, you know, difficult experiences with other people and you can sign up to participate. And also they're offering trainings to mental health professionals to lead climate cafes. So if that's something that, you know, calls to you as a mental health professional, you can go to a training and then think about leading these cafes. And actually I was just on their website recently and noticed that they're starting a podcast. Oh, really? So they've got just a few episodes so far it looks like. Yeah. But there's really a lot that's happening in that group. They have a very active listserv, so I just really want, yeah. Especially mental health professionals to know about it.

[00:32:33] **Ann Kelley:** So is that group specifically for mental health professionals? Yes, it is. Okay. So I thought of becoming more aware as a mental health professional of not only helping our clients talk about it, but helping our own body get ready to talk about it and actually sort of educating ourselves in the process.

And I think what's really moving is that we can really have an impact by helping people and helping ourselves of course, really deal with this situation in a way that makes us engaged instead of. Avoidant or

[00:33:08] **Anna Graybeal:** overwhelmed. Right. And I think when you say engaged as instead of avoidant, I think together. You know, instead of alone.

[00:33:16] **Ann Kelley:** Yes. Yeah. Cuz it was, we're so much better together, aren't we? So

[00:33:20] **Anna Graybeal:** much better together. Yes. Yeah,

[00:33:23] **Ann Kelley:** absolutely. I, yeah, that's absolutely true. Before we wrap, let's talk about the other element of resistance, right? We talked about like, of course, the desire to avoid and the other. You know is that it's very distressing and so we don't want to have those feelings, and we're talking about going in, but I think there's this other element, and that is if we really, really accept it, if we really accept it's happening and we need to do something about it, there's no way to do that without some experience of loss. If you are really letting it in, then it means change has to happen, which is why it becomes so political, right? Nobody really wants that change in their community or you know, I'm just as guilty as anybody. I'm not that this is not me standing in any kind of self-righteous place. The change that has to happen for us to all as a collective group. Really make a difference for us, for our kids, for our kids kids. We have to change.

[00:34:19] **Anna Graybeal:** And that's hard. Oh my God, that is so hard. And there are lots of different ideas about just sort of how much do we have to change? Right. The group that I talked about before, the Citizens Climate Lobby, they're shifting a bit actually, but they have been very, very focused on one legislative agenda, which is to put a price on carbon. And they're basically saying that one simple act that Congress could just pass and you know, the president could sign, could totally transform the entire energy sector, you know, and move everything, you know, take time obviously, but away from fossil fuels to renewable energy, almost like. That's sort of all we need to do. There's lots and lots of people who will say, we have a lot bigger problem than that. And some people will say, you know, we have to get rid of capitalism. We can't live in a capitalist society and live sustainably on the earth. And you know, this is a vast, vast area and I don't pretend to understand all of it or to really know, you know, exactly what the best path is. But I think. Engaging in that conversation and trying to think about it and do what feels right to you at some level. I mean, yeah.

[00:35:31] **Ann Kelley:** You know, it's so interesting that like when you say do what's right to you, on some level, that is something that I struggle with because there's not a really good answer, right?

Like I remember actually. You know, back when I was, you know, burgeoning college student in weird liberal Austin, Texas, and I'd go back to my family and I'd be like, touting, recycling, and they would eye roll me and they thought it was ridiculous, right? And I think I'm saving the world. Well, right now, recycling is not enough.

Like, you know what I'm saying? Not even close. Right. So the individual things we can do, while they're hugely important, and I wanna talk about that before we end. What are the individual, if we decided to do nothing else after listening to this podcast, but a few things. I guess my point was we can't just be satisfied because we're recycling.

[00:36:16] **Anna Graybeal:** Yeah, and we had to look, really look out for sort of that greenwashing thing that like, oh, thinking, oh, because I'm doing this thing, then I'm, I'm helping. And meanwhile, yeah, you're not, it's not making a difference. Well say more about that. Well, like the recycling thing that, you know, you're right.

Recycling, at least the way I understand it right now, it's not making a bit of difference at all because no one's buying our recycled goods. And so, The green washing idea is that they're sort of saying, touting that, oh, we're doing such good stuff, but then what they're actually doing really is a drop in the bucket.

And that's what's frustrating, right? Because any individual action is a drop in the bucket. By definition. You know? Yes. Some things you could do. You could get an electric car, you could get solar panels on your house. Those are big expenses though not everyone can afford to do that. Obviously. Another thing you can do is really sort of try and find good offsets that you can buy offset credits or whatever.

There's an organization I've heard about that's supposed to be really good called trade water and you can calculate, you know, how much per month do I need to contribute to them. They. They, what they do is they collect chlorofluorocarbons out of the atmosphere that are really, really potent green inhouse gases.

And so you calculate what's my utility bill and how much do I need to sort of offset, how much do I need to pay them Every month's offset. So there's lots of things like that. Trying to eat less meat. Agriculture industry is a huge problem, you know, and red meat in particular.

[00:37:41] **Ann Kelley:** Um, can you, can you actually talk a little bit about that? I mean, I know this isn't necessarily your expertise per se, but you have a lot of knowledge about that, and why is that so difficult, and what difference would it make if we shifted away from red meat or really reduced our use of red meat? What do you see? Can you unpack that for us a little bit?

[00:37:59] **Anna Graybeal:** So, you know, that's not my area of expertise. Certainly it has been found to have a very big impact, especially beef consumption is particularly bad. So if you're interested, you wanna find out more. I mean, there's lots of resources out there, but I would recommend the I P C C reports, the Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change. They've been coming out with periodic reports and they specifically have information on the impact of agriculture and meat consumption.

[00:38:25] **Ann Kelley:** That's super helpful and we of course will have that in our show notes. And so I guess part of what we're talking about is really increasing our own knowledge. We've been talking about how to talk about it, but part of it is as we move to talk about it, we'll be more open to that part of our body that has curiosity instead of blocking, avoiding fighting. Secure relating involves curiosity. So one of the things we're wanting to do with this podcast and secure relating with this is, To help our bodies get to a place that we have curiosity and in there provide some resources so that people out there can go check out more information for yourselves and make some decisions for yourselves on this and how we can have an impact. But if we can collectively deal with these difficult feelings of our resistance, if we can go, okay, I do need to have loss, I have to engage in loss. And by significantly reducing beef and, and maybe we'll end up putting some information in the show notes specifically about that, but that's not my expertise either. But what we're talking about is more our ability to know that we can do bigger things collectively, like the more, as we talk about it as a group, that we can make bigger

[00:39:36] **Anna Graybeal:** movements. Yeah. I personally have found that. If I focus a lot on my personal action and what I should give up, it feels hard. I feel guilty when I don't wanna do it, and I feel despairing that it doesn't even matter anyway. And here I am giving up something I really care about and loved, and it's not even gonna make a difference. So, For me personally, it has been better to work on the bigger picture things. That's why I really was drawn to Citizens Climate Lobby initially because I really liked oh one piece of legislation and we can completely transform our energy system in the in the country. That appeals to me a lot. But my brother is an organic vegetable farmer and he is really inspired by the personal stuff. And so he's been a vegetarian for years and years and years, and that's really meaningful and important to him, and he shares that with other people. So I guess I always sort of try to say like, do what works for you. Do what calls to you. I don't wanna push people to like, you have to give up things or else you're a bad person or else you're not, not doing enough. I mean, that's just. Not gonna engage.

[00:40:47] **Ann Kelley:** That's so true. Especially if the emphasis, if you don't do it, you're a bad person rather than, and I, but I think the group conversation really matters because I'm willing, and, and you know, social scientists has shown this, I'm willing to give up more of my individual when I really know it's gonna affect the group.

It's gonna help. Right? Yes. It's gonna, and I'm willing to, so if I'm talking about it and I'm with you and I'm having these conversations or having the conversations with our kids, you know, and I think, oh, I can give this sacrifice up because I can see. And so it's really seen that can make effect. They can have an impact.

Yes. And. I agree. Like the difference between, I think you and I bonded over that. We were talking about me having a son in Maine who's given up everything. It was on the podcast before and you having a brother, we could really relate. Yeah. And like what can we do? But I do have to continuously push myself and I'm trying to, so I do think there's something about having these conversations about really hard feelings.

Where we can get through that and if we can connect that it's hard in a group and we can, we can accept loss

[00:41:50] **Anna Graybeal:** more. Yes. If we're not the only ones doing it. If we're doing it for each other because we care about each other. Yes. All of that. That's the real heart of it to me, because we're doing it for each other.

[00:42:00] **Ann Kelley:** Just this idea that if we have to feel like instead of fear that we have hope and that we have care. To me, secure relating is getting away from the me, myself, and I. It's like what affects me or what affects my specific. Little niche. I'm gonna hold on tightly everybody else be damned. Right, right, right, right.

I mean, cuz that's the, the really truth. Like we, those of us that are creating the most havoc out there in the world are being impacted the least. And so we have to take in our effect on the rest of the world. I

[00:42:34] **Anna Graybeal:** just think of it as sort of the idea of being on your deathbed, you know, and what's going to have mattered to you in your life, you know, and it's like, Not that you got the most of something, but that you were deeply connected to people that you loved and that loved you back over and over again.

We see that that's what really, you know, matters the most.

[00:42:52] **Ann Kelley:** Yeah. And when you're really connected and you're willing to sacrifice for one amo another, it really impacts you positively, right? Like this idea. That if I can give up some loss, it's not going to be, I'm not going to, I don't see myself in my current world living on a farm, but I have so much more admiration for those and the education I've gotten about how important it is to have sustainable food sources and to really support that, that's not just some. You know, wild idea out there. Some fringe thing. Yeah. Yeah. How to eat more locally, how to require less for things to be, I have to have the strawberry that's flown in from chili or, you know, I'm obviously making that up, but like I. The clean, renewable resources, like you mentioned, the electric car and solar panels and like supporting that, that we can get behind.



[00:43:43] **Anna Graybeal:** Yeah, they're even like community solar, uh, projects, you know, where you can go in. Yeah. I, again, I'm, this is not my area of expertise, but I just know they exist and communities are, you know, pulling together resources so they can all benefit from using. The solar that is created. Yeah.

[00:43:59] **Ann Kelley:** Where would somebody find that kind of information out? If they were interested in like, let's say their particular thing.

[00:44:04] **Anna Graybeal:** I mean, I would just Google, you know, community solar project and start sort of that process maybe with Austin, Texas, if you're looking in Austin. So what else

[00:44:13] **Ann Kelley:** have we talked more things to do? Anything else that comes to mind? If people are out there learning to really have these kind of conversations?

[00:44:20] **Anna Graybeal:** That I really think as people and as therapists talking about it, moving towards talking to each other about it and trying to be really mindful of how stirring it is emotionally and how we need to be with each other, with that activation that comes with these discussions. And we, therapists and psychologists know a lot about what that means, how to, how to help people be with really difficult feelings and still be engaged again in this sort of productive, emotional conversation. That is really more and more first and foremost for me. I mean, there's so many different actions that can be taken, but I feel like we all need. That emotional support and being with each other around those feelings.

[00:45:11] **Ann Kelley:** Ah, E even as you were saying that, I felt myself open up to the conversation more. Right? Not because I want to, but as as I could feel my body relaxing. As you were saying that, cuz what you're saying is like how important it is to talk about it. Like if we talk about it and if we join and we go through these hard things together, we're gonna feel closer. In our community and on our planet to working together rather than the infighting and like, no, I'm gonna hold onto my coal in this area and like, wait, wait.

We can do this together by talking about it and making sure that the conversations are really relevant. And I started this episode off saying that I really admire and respect you because that is part of what I feel like. You were a leader in the community about even when it's hard, I can remember you saying, Hey, do you wanna be part of this group? It was years ago. And I'm like, I'm so busy. Yeah. That, that sounds really wonderful. Right? But no, but

[00:46:07] **Anna Graybeal:** I, but yet,

[00:46:09] **Ann Kelley:** but the irony is it lodged in me. Like I never forgot that. Right? Like you had said, I wasn't ready for something like that. I didn't know, I think even at this time I would even have a podcast.

And I can't even tell you how long ago that was, to be honest with you. But, but I do remember it. And I, what I respect about you is that you've been out there for a while. Like you said, you went to Washington, you tried to ring bells, things like that, and you were realizing that what you really needed to do was to help people talk. Because if you have the impact of helping people talk, and I do, and all those out there, it will help us move in a more secure way that we really. Do have hope we can really, really make a

[00:46:50] **Anna Graybeal:** difference. Yeah, I love that so much and I love that that lodged in you so many years ago. That actually really feels good to to know, you know, planting seed and also, I don't know if this is maybe dark, but it really does bring me comfort even if, even if it's too late, like even if the hope is sort of futile.

I would rather be together as it's going down. I would rather, you know, I want to be with my securely attached, you know, loved ones around me, even if we're not gonna be able to pull this out, you know? So no matter what, I want to be connected to other people with these feelings.

[00:47:32] **Ann Kelley:** I think that's really, really powerful and it's a hard thing to hear, right?

Like even if it's too late and then I'm sort of that. Known in my family as the eternal optimist in this. Right. So, and it's led to some of my resistance, actually I talked about that in the last podcast, that it leads to my resistance, but I also think it's my strength. So what I love is your strength is seeing it for real, seeing how hard it is getting us talking about it, even if it is because how much it can move us.

Yeah. And yet, like for me, I know that we can have an impact. We

[00:48:10] **Anna Graybeal:** can certainly help it not be as bad, you know? I mean, we can absolutely do that.

[00:48:15] **Ann Kelley:** Yeah, I think science is showing that our climate's getting warmer. We're not going to avoid that. How warm it's gonna get, how rapidly we can have a huge impact. How your kids are impacted by this. How my kids, how their kids significantly can be, and those kind of things of like getting involved, like. When it's even on a political level, when people are talking about this is an important thing, if we'd had only listened when it brought up to LBJ 50 years ago, you know, like if we would really, really listened, we'd be in a different place. So right now here we are here. We don't wanna look back 20 years from now and say, if we'd only listened, cuz if we have that hope and we have that connection, you were the one that recommended that Ted talk. The Katherine Hak. Katherine Hak.

Yeah. Yeah. It really is good. But one of the things that, like you said, she moved into this like social science kind of

perspective, political science, and like if you and your community can have this impact and you over here in this community can have that impact, and we're all having different levels of impact in our sphere, instead of thinking that, oh, I can't affect a huge. Climate, I can't affect the whole thing, so I'm just gonna give up like, but if you can affect what's broadly in your sphere, right? At,

[00:49:30] **Anna Graybeal:** at whatever level, if you can affect your neighbors by putting solar panels on your house or Yeah, really we need to do all of it. So any impact you have in whatever way is really helpful.

[00:49:41] **Ann Kelley:** It's so it's gonna be helpful and the bigger thing is gonna help you. And this is a secure relating position. It's gonna help you feel agency, right. And then you actually will be having agency. So that is the secure relating part that we're saying. And that is, mm-hmm. Dealing with the hard feelings, dealing with the activation, getting involved, having the hard conversations, and then affecting the way we can while dealing with the reality that we exist in.

[00:50:05] **Anna Graybeal:** Right, right. Yeah. And not being alone doing all of that together.

[00:50:09] **Ann Kelley:** Yeah. I love that you bring it back to that each time, how important that is. That you're not alone. And I think that's why we wanna have these conversations while you were, you know, like you're not, if you're out there as a listener, And you've been feeling this anxiety and turning it off or, or maybe trying to talk to people about it and like, sh, am I overreacting? Like, no, you're not alone. Let's have these conversations. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I really appreciate you coming on the show. Thank

[00:50:36] **Anna Graybeal:** you. It's been such a pleasure. I really appreciate you having me and you engaging in this. I know it's hard.

[00:50:43] **Ann Kelley:** How would people contact you if they were interested in maybe being part of some of the groups that you're interested in or forming more groups?

Probably

[00:50:50] **Anna Graybeal:** the best way would be to go to my website, which is just [anna.grave.com](http://anna.grave.com), and I've got my phone number and stuff listed there so they can just reach out that way.

[00:50:59] **Ann Kelley:** Okay, great. We will also, we will have that in our show notes. All right you guys, thanks for listening and if you have found this information powerful and helpful, which I hope that you do, please feel the desire to pass it on so that other people can be impacted.

It helps us if you rate and review us and if anyone out there feels like they can, cuz not everyone can to help support us through Patreon or Super cast, just for \$5 a month, you could be. Part of getting our message about secure relating far and wide. So you would just go to [Therapist Uncensored slash join](https://www.therapistuncensored.com) and sign up there.

All right. Thanks so much and we'll see you around the bend.